

I am concerned about the possibility that the FCC will pass legislation requiring all television manufacturers to include copy-protection in any television receiver or recorder. As a citizen of the United States, I oppose any such action for many reasons. This essentially gives the movie industry and television networks control over the audio/video equipment in MY living room. It also gives them the right to prevent me from using my right to fair use. Personally, I do record some television shows to video cassette using a VCR. I do this because often times my favorite TV shows are broadcast at a time when I am not able to watch them. I record the shows for later viewing. Such use is permissible to me under the fair use guidelines. If copyright control were to be built in to every television and VCR, then how would I be able to record television shows for later viewing? I wouldn't. My right to fair use would effectively be stripped away. Media companies combat this argument by saying that by using "broadcast flags" they will be able to determine whether a show can be recorded or not. I ask, once a system is implemented, what benefit would the media company have for marking their broadcasts as recordable? Absolutely none. Further, all it takes is one single device capable of recording all shows to capture the programming to defeat such copyright restrictions. Such devices will be freely available in markets outside of the United States, and because they will not feature any mandated technology, only market driven technology, they will undeniably be cheaper to purchase. From a consumer standpoint, I would rather purchase a fully functional device outside of the United States at a cheaper price, than a device that provides limited functionality at an inflated price. Copyright control is overall bad for the United States as it will only force further piracy, higher prices, and technological backlash against it.